

March 13, 2005

# Freedom

war

Command - Afghanistan



***Soldiers, Airmen  
aid Afghans  
during harsh winter  
Page 10***





Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson

## Training day...

Afghan National Army soldiers fire blanks at a platoon "attacking" their position during a training exercise at the Kabul Military Training Center. Training exercises such as this prepare the soldiers for future missions they may have to conduct. The ANA is building its professional ranks to meet its goal of 70,000 soldiers. More than 20,000 now serve in the army.

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Sp. Brian Klunk, Co. C, 367th Eng. Bn., unloads a supply truck for distribution of humanitarian aid in a village in central Afghanistan's Parwan Province. The assistance was provided to villagers who were unable to get food or winter supplies because of road closures. Coalition members provided the villagers with food, clothes, blankets and medicine.

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# Freedom Watch

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# Afghans, Coalition forces aid snow-bound villagers

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

NAWA DISTRICT, Afghanistan — The severe winter weather in eastern Afghanistan left many villages cut off from vital supplies in the mountainous terrain of eastern Ghazni Province. Clearing the roads of more than three feet of snow to get villagers necessary supplies was extremely difficult.

Ghazni Province Governor Asadula Kalat came to the Coalition with a terrible situation. The people in some of the remote villages were starving and suffering due to exposure to the elements.

"There are 10,000 families in the Nawa District," said Kalat. "They have no wood for fuel or food. They are dying."

The governor had supplies to help the villagers, but no way to get the supplies to the

people who badly needed them, said 1st Lt. Brian Ostrowski, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment.

The governor asked for cooperation from the Coalition forces working in the area.

"He had the supplies; we had the ways and means of getting it to the people," said Co. A infantryman Spc. Scott Campell.

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter stopped at Forward Operating Base Ghazni and picked up bags of flour, beans and rice, as well as oil for cooking and heating, and blankets.

The crew then flew the supplies and the governor to a small village surrounded by nothing but deep snow.

When the governor got off the aircraft into the single-digit temperature and stepped into three feet of snow, a small



**Afghans in Nawa District unload oil for cooking and heating from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. The Coalition forces brought the provisions to the people because roads in the area were closed by extreme snowfall.**

crowd of people greeted him and started to unload the much-needed supplies from the aircraft.

After the aircraft was unloaded, it returned to the FOB, leaving behind over five tons of food and blankets.

The aircraft was again loaded with supplies and headed out to another desperate village.

As the pilots neared the area, they found they couldn't land because of poor visibility, so they performed an aerial drop of the supplies.

The people of the village ran out to collect the provisions as they fell from the sky.

"We delivered over 10 tons of food to the people," said Kalat.

The supplies were enough to help them survive until they were able to get out and get more supplies for themselves, said Campell.

This life-saving mission is just one example of the cooperation between Coalition forces and the Afghan government.

"This provides us with an opportunity to show the people what their government is capable of," said Campell. "It showed them that the government cares about the people."

This emergency humanitarian aid also has benefits for the Soldiers involved.

"It's days like this that let you know that your time away from home is worth it," said Ostrowski. "It feels good to the guys that they feel they can make a difference to the people here."

The humanitarian aid provided by the governor and delivered via Coalition aircraft is a change of pace in this war-torn country.

"When we were flying over the village, I was thinking about when the Soviets were here and the only thing that came from the air was bombs," said Kalat. "Now, they are getting food from the sky. This is very good for my people."



**Above: Soldiers at FOB Ghazni load bags of flour, rice and beans onto a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. The food and other supplies were delivered to villagers stranded in the mountains by three feet of snow. The emergency humanitarian aid was a joint effort between the Coalition and Afghan government.**

**Right: Spc. Mike Hodgson (left) and Cpl. Nicholas Gulick, both of Co. B, 214th Avn. Rgt., wave to the villagers on the ground as they fly away.**





# Flight surgeons honored in Afghanistan

Story by Staff Sgt. Monica Garreau  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Ensuring the pilots and crew chiefs of Joint Task Force Wings remain fit to fly is a task that largely rests on the shoulders of the unit's flight surgeons. They serve as a liaison to the command to ensure that the health of the crews is considered during mission planning.

In Afghanistan, the task is extensive and has taken the flight surgeons to the far reaches of the country. Their dedication to Operation Enduring Freedom and the service members fighting the Global War on Terrorism was recognized by multiple aviation organizations when three of them were nominated for and received awards.

## Dr. (Lt. Col.) John Smyrski

The Army Aviation Association of America selected Dr. (Lt. Col.) John Smyrski as the 2004 Flight Surgeon of the Year. Smyrski is the JTF Wings surgeon and the chief of the Aviation Medicine Clinic at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

A former pilot, Smyrski was encouraged to follow his dreams of attending medical school by a flight surgeon in his unit. That same flight surgeon was honored with the same award 10 years ago, a lineage that Smyrski is proud to join.



Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

"The fact that my peers recognized me for the work I do as a surgeon (means a lot)," he said. "It reflects some of the accomplishments we've made, both in the unit and in the Aviation Medicine Clinic, in the past two years that I've been in the job."

Smyrski enjoys his current position because he feels he is making a signifi-

cant impact on the health and well-being of the Soldiers in his unit.

"I get to interact with Soldiers and I can make a difference in their lives," he said.

Also making a difference are the other surgeons and medics who complete the team at the JTF Wings Aid Station, said Smyrski.

"I'm extremely proud of my medics and what they've accomplished," he said. "It's amazing the growth I've seen in them in a short amount of time."

## Maj. Gary McKay



Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

The Society of U.S. Army Flight Surgeons selected Maj. Gary McKay as its 2004 Aeromedical Physician Assistant of the Year.

"Certainly I'm very appreciative," said McKay. "(But) that's not what I came here to do."

What he came here to do is ensure the pilots and crew chiefs who are integral to Operation Enduring Freedom's success remain healthy.

Currently a member of the Utah National Guard, McKay was in the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. Since then, he has continuously sought jobs with a direct impact on the Global War on Terrorism. His most recent volunteer effort was this year-long deployment to Afghanistan as the Task Force Pirate flight surgeon and aeromedical physician assistant.

"We've had a very commendable operational rate among the pilots and aircrew," said McKay. "A lot of that can be attributed to health."

In fact, the most rewarding contributions he has made has been "to keep the pilots flying," he said.

While serving in Afghanistan, McKay has participated in many different types

of missions, including air assaults and inserts, and multiple humanitarian assistance missions.

"I've gotten to see a great deal," he said. "It's been pretty interesting and rewarding to be in this significant part of history."

## Dr. (Maj.) Terry Lakin

The 2004 Flight Surgeon of the Year for the Army Medical Department didn't want to hang around Schofield Barracks while everyone else deployed to Afghanistan. So, Dr. (Maj.) Terry Lakin volunteered to deploy with the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, but he was turned down. Several times.

He didn't give up and finally got the mission he sought.

"This war on terrorism is an incredibly important thing for our generation, and I wanted to do as much as I could to join the fight," said Lakin.

He soon found himself driving through small Afghan villages with the ground Soldiers of his unit, conducting reconnaissance and cooperative medical assistance missions for the local people.



Courtesy photo

"It was just an incredible experience to roll around all these villages with the ground troops and conduct all these CMAs in villages where many of the people had never seen Coalition troops," said Lakin. "It was a good experience to help the people out medically."

Lakin enjoyed his time attached to the cavalry and thinks very highly of the unit.

"It's been a great challenging and learning year, and fun too," he said.

As for the award itself, "it's an incredible honor just to be nominated by your peers in your unit," said Lakin. "It's nice that they think that much of me and appreciate the work that we're doing together."

# U.S., Coalition troops support Kabul school

Story and photos by  
Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson  
Office of Military Cooperation –  
Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Children at a local school will have it a little easier carrying books and supplies to and from school thanks to some Coalition military personnel.

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and two Romanian officers from Kabul Compound visited the Leisa BiBi Maro School and brought donated book bags and school supplies as part of Operation School House.

"We started Operation School House in mid-2004 to donate materials to local schools and orphanages," said Sgt. 1st Class Cindy Southard, Directorate of Public Works noncommissioned officer in charge for Kabul Compound.

The program is a group effort started by 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Forward 2, and includes other volunteers from Kabul Compound.

The volunteer group receives

donations from sources in the United States and divides what is collected among the children at the schools and orphanages.

Operation School House obtained 1,000 military map bags from the Afghan National Army and donated them to the children at the school, said Southard. The bags were part of a third-country donation to the ANA.

The teachers at the school also received donated materials as part of Operation Educate.

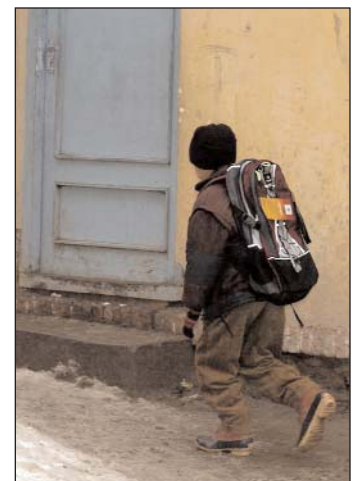
Lt. Col. Joel Sloss, of the Defense Operations Sector of the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan, worked with the parents of students at Ocee Elementary School in Alpharetta, Ga., to provide for the teachers.

"Through a series of dinners, fundraisers and a \$1,000 grant from a bank, these parents of our Ocee Parent Teacher Association have provided me the materials that I shared today," said Sloss, a fourth-grade teacher at Ocee.



**Above: Girls at the Leisa BiBi Maro School in Kabul are all smiles after receiving donated bookbags as part of Operation School House.**

**Right: A student returns to his classroom after receiving a bookbag.**



Sloss gave the teachers 20 individual chalkboards, 20 reams of paper designed for drawing on the upper half and writing on the bottom half, math kits for the children to use, and one large kit for the math department.

It may only be one school in one city in Afghanistan, but every great endeavor starts with one step. And with many steps like Operation School

House and Operation Educate, more and more girls and boys will be able to contribute to the success of the future of Afghanistan.

## Enduring Voices

*What is one thing that has made your mission here go more smoothly?*



**Sgt. 1st Class  
Lom Chouchan**  
FOB Salerno Base Operations  
*"Entertainment for the troops."*



**Capt. Wesley Madden**  
68th Med. Co. (Air Ambulance)  
*"The work of my crew chiefs and medics."*



**Marine Lance Cpl.  
Craig Krebs**  
HSC, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines  
*"Hand warmers we get in care packages."*



**Chief Warrant Officer  
Julio Ovalle**  
Co. D, 165th MI Bn.  
*"The responsiveness of different base organizations."*



# Paktika conference helps strengthen region

Story and photo by Sgt. Frank Magni  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

SHARANA, Afghanistan — Despite poor weather and road conditions, local leaders met with members of the Coalition and non-governmental organizations in Sharana for the first Paktika Province Security and Reconstruction Conference Feb. 24.

Hosted through a cooperative effort between Governor Haji Mohammed Glilab Mengal’s staff, the Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team and 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, the conference was organized to discuss current security and future reconstruction within eastern Afghanistan’s Paktika Province.

“The goal for this conference was to bring the local government together with NGOs and provide a real assessment of the security situation in (Paktika Province),” said Sgt. Jill Murphy, Sharana PRT Civil Affairs team noncommissioned officer in charge.

“(Paktika Province) is still viewed as one of the more unstable places in Afghanistan,” she said. “But, even in the last year, the situation has improved greatly.”

While security was the main topic, the group also discussed healthcare, education and local government during the one-day conference.

Because the conference was the first of its kind in the area, the organizers didn’t know how well attended it would be.

For the PRT and governor’s staff, the challenge was to get the word out to local leaders and NGOs.



**A local district leader from Paktika Province asks officials a question during the first Paktika Province Security and Reconstruction Conference. The conference was a forum for local leaders from Paktika Province, members of non-governmental organizations and the Coalition to discuss future reconstruction in Paktika.**

“It was a major push for us to get to as many areas as possible in the last eight weeks to let them know this would be taking place,” said Murphy.

Weather and road conditions also remained poor the day of the conference.

But despite all the challenges in organizing the conference, when it began, the room overflowed with people eager to address Paktika’s reconstruction needs.

“The turnout was overwhelming,” said Murphy.

NGO representatives were on hand to

discuss future projects with the people of the province.

M. Mahir Yaqobi, deputy country director for the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, made the trip from Kabul.

He said his organization views Paktika Province as a very important area to focus its efforts.

“I felt it was very important to be here, because in a forum like this you are able to

*See Conference, Page 15*

## AAFES SERVICES HOURS OF OPERATION

### Bagram Air Base

<b>PX</b>	<b>Massage</b>
0230-1630	0400-1800
<b>Shoppette</b>	<b>Alterations</b>
0230-1630	0430-1430
<b>Burger King</b>	<b>Embroidery Shop</b>
0430-1730	0430-1430
<b>Food Court</b>	<b>Gift Shops</b>
0600-1630	0430-1430
<b>Coffee Shop</b>	<b>Sports Apparel</b>
24 hours	0430-1430
<b>Barber Shop</b>	<b>Black Ops Store</b>
0430-1530	0430-1530
<b>Day Spa</b>	
0400-1600	

### Kandahar Airfield

<b>PX</b>	<b>Day Spa</b>
0500-1700	0500-1700
<b>Burger King</b>	<b>Alterations</b>
0430-1730	0500-1700
<b>Pizza Hut</b>	<b>Embroidery Shop</b>
0600-1800	0500-1700
<b>Subway</b>	<b>Gift Shops</b>
0600-1430	0500-1700
<b>Coffee Shop</b>	<b>Sports Apparel</b>
24hrs	0500-1700
<b>Main Barber Shop</b>	<b>Black Ops Store</b>
0500-1700	0500-1700
<b>Lagoon Barber Shop</b>	<b>Leather Shop</b>
0300-1700	0500-1700

### TF Phoenix

<b>PX</b>
0430-1630
<b>Barber Shop</b>
0330-1530
<b>Alterations</b>
0330-1630
<b>Coffee Shop</b>
24 hours

### Kabul

<b>PX</b>
0430-1630
<b>Barber Shop</b>
0330-1530
<b>Coffee Shop</b>
24 hours

*\* All times in Zulu/GMT*

## *Sergeant Audie Murphy Club*

# New members inducted in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank Magni  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — The Bagram Airfield chapter of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club inducted ten new members at Bagram Airfield on Feb. 16.

Run by members of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, membership was open to any Army sergeant through sergeant first class on Bagram Airfield.

The ceremony included presentations featuring the Soldier's Request and the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer. The new

inductees also recited the biography of Audie Murphy, including his storied and decorated Army career, his battlefield commission, and his career as an actor and songwriter.

On hand to present each inductee with their Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction medal was Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander.

In remarks before the official presentation, Olson said Afghanistan is the perfect place to recognize the achievements of NCOs like the SAMC members.

"This operation is built around small units," said Olson. "And critical to the success and performance of every small unit is

the noncommissioned officer. Noncommissioned officers are essential to taking care of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines in Operation Enduring Freedom."

During the induction, each of the NCOs had one of their Soldiers give a brief synopsis of why they feel their leader is deserving of such an honor.

Making the presentation for Staff Sgt. Marc Jones, 58th Military Police Company, was Spc. Daniel Merriweather.

Seeing his NCO inducted into the Sergeant



**Each inductee is presented a medal like this one to wear at Sergeant Audie Murphy Club functions.**

Audie Murphy Club made Merriweather feel good, he said.

"I already knew that he was a great leader, but I'm proud of him because I knew how much this meant to him," said Merriweather. "He worked very hard and showed me that nothing is too hard in the Army to accomplish."

For all of the inductees, admission into the club involved a series of boards, with some inductees competing at battalion and brigade levels just to get a chance at the Sergeant Audie Murphy board.

But using the term "board" doesn't entirely describe what occurs for induction into SAMC, said Sgt. 1st Class Brian Mincey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CJTF-76.

"The boards are totally different (compared to) what happens at a traditional

**See SAMC, Page 14**



**Sgt. 1st Class Erika Gordon, 25th MP Co., recites the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer during a presentation at the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction ceremony.**

## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Vehicles from 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, pass jingle trucks in the mud and snow of a winter storm while travelling at dawn in Naka District in Paktika Province. The unit is preparing to redeploy after a year-long tour in which they conducted numerous security and stability operations throughout eastern Afghanistan.

*Photo by Capt. Kevin Higgins  
2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt.*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to [freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil). Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.





# Wolfhounds complete last OEF mission

## 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., scouts conduct final operation in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank Magni  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan — It didn't begin with fanfare or a ceremony. Instead, it began as any other mission would for Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, "Wolfhounds."

The team and squad leaders conducted a pre-combat inspection while the drivers finished the meticulous preventive maintenance checks and services on their vehicles.

After nearly a year of practice, the science of preparation was just a series of fluid procedures, no different from the ones before. But this mission was different. After it was complete, the scouts would greet their replacements, pack up the remainder of their gear and redeploy.



Above: Sgt. John Diaz, Scout Platoon, HHC, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., pulls perimeter security on his last patrol as part of OEF.

Right: Davis' team conducts a dismounted patrol just outside the city of Sharana on their last mission.



Spec. Chad Davis, Scout Platoon, HHC, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., pulls perimeter security for his last patrol in support of Operation Enduring Freedom while the rest of his team conducts a village assessment.

This was their last mission.

"It was something we really didn't want to talk about, because we had a job to do," said Scout Platoon Team Leader Sgt. John Diaz.

This particular mission in eastern Afghanistan would take the scouts from Forward Operating Base Orgun-E to FOB Sharana. Like any other mission, this one was divided into different sub-missions along the way.

While moving to FOB Sharana, the scouts conducted convoy security much like they did throughout the year.

The scouts moved through the Afghan communities to conduct mounted and dismounted presence patrols — a mission they have become accustomed to during the many village assessments they participated in as their battalion delivered

humanitarian assistance in Paktika Province.

They also used their technique of over watch to secure routes for other Wolfhound units along the way.

The scouts even participated in a non-traditional mission when they assisted in getting various jingle trucks out of the mud.

Many of the skills the scouts honed during their time in Operation Enduring Freedom were used on their last patrol. And while many of the Scouts avoided the thought that this would be their last mission, others said they thought a little about it along the way.

Diaz said he used some of the time to reflect on the past year.

**See Final, Page 14**





# 551st Military Police Co. serves OEF

## *MPs' missions diverse during one-year tour*

Story by Spc. Chris Stump  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — From Kosovo to Djibouti to Iraq to Afghanistan, the 551st Military Police Company has made its presence known throughout the world over the past five years.

Now serving on a fourth continent and fourth deployment in almost as many years, the company, which belongs to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), has provided a great asset to Operation Enduring Freedom during its tour here.

Although the military policemen will soon fly back to Fort Campbell, Ky., to rejoin their division and prepare for another deployment to Iraq, the impact they made on Afghanistan will last for years to come.

The 551st was involved with diverse missions that tapped into everything a great unit has to offer, said Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Theresa Allaire.

From personal security for general officers to convoy security into the remote reaches of Afghanistan's dusty roads, the MPs made a lot happen and saw a lot during their missions, said Company Operations Sergeant Master Sgt. Lonnie Loeschner.

One of the company's biggest missions for aiding the developing democracy was sending advisers to assist the local police forces throughout the country. Known as Police Tactical Advisory Teams, each has



Sgt. Frank Magni

**Above: Spc. Patrick Little, 551st MP Co., is awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in Ghor Province.**

**Right: Spc. Jason Litteer, 551st MP CO., searches an Afghan man who sought care during a cooperative medical assistance mission in Bamian Province.**

three MPs assigned to it and works hand-in-hand with the Afghan National Police to provide training and mentorship.

From a small-unit mission like a PTAT to something on a larger scale such as security for the Dec. 7, 2004, Afghan presidential inauguration, the MPs of the company know they are chosen to conduct important missions because they have shown they can succeed, said Loeschner.

"The Soldiers of the 551st show that we're good," he said.

A sentiment echoed by other leaders in the unit.

"We've got Soldiers throughout Afghanistan, from Kabul to Shindand," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Doggett, 551st MP Co. operations sergeant. "The Soldiers make it happen. If it weren't for the Soldiers of 551, the company wouldn't be what it is."

"We've been involved in almost everything here in Afghanistan," he said.

Team leader Sgt. Patrick Gallagher is one of those MPs involved in many operations during his time in country. He also served a tour in Djibouti before deploying here.

From his last duty position in force protection at Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan, to his current job at Bagram Airfield, the NCO said the unit is successful because the



Spc. Cheryl Ransford

"Soldiers give 110 percent every time."

Whether the MPs are searching trucks at Kandahar Airfield or teaching the ANP how to do the same at the Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team, "every day was exciting," said Gallagher. "You never know what's going to happen, but we're there and ready."

Always ready and able to complete any task is what makes the 551st MP Co. a vital asset to OEF, said Loeschner.

"Good NCOs, really good Soldiers are what makes it easy to be in this company," he said.

"Without a doubt" the unit's success is credited to the Soldiers, said Loeschner. Not just the MPs themselves, but the support they get from the rest of the company.

"We've got some of the greatest medics around," he said. "And 98 percent of our trucks are always on the road. Supply — I've never asked for something they couldn't find."

Everyone working together is what makes it all happen, agreed both Loeschner and Doggett.

"We were really able to help the MP mission here," said Allaire. "All the combat experience in this company and the experienced squad and team leaders really allowed us to get out and do our mission."



Sgt. Frank Magni

**Members of the 551st MP Co. recover a vehicle from a river in Bamian Province during a convoy escort mission.**



# Parwan villages receive emergency relief

Story and photos by  
Air Force Capt. Catie Hague  
455th Air Expeditionary Wing

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — In a 40-person, 16-vehicle convoy, Soldiers and Airmen from Bagram Airfield traveled over 30 miles southwest into the mountains, delivering humanitarian aid to two snowbound villages Feb. 16.

This relief mission was organized and led by the Army's Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team. Enough blankets, clothes, food and medicine were provided for 2,700 households.

"Our mission was to bring humanitarian aid supplies to the Salang District headquarters for further distribution by the district chief to two villages snowed in," said Army Maj. Mike Hoss, Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team Civil Military Operations Center officer in charge.

"Afghans are dying because of the cold," he said. "Houses have been falling in due to the weight of the snow. If we didn't get up here and provide some assistance, we could have more deaths."

The Parwan PRT provides humanitarian aid throughout the province as needed. During this winter season, that has resulted in an average of three missions per month.

"Normally, we offer aid and medical assistance about once a month," said



**Afghans in Parwan District form a human supply chain to remove over 100 pounds of humanitarian aid from Army trucks.**

Hoss. "But because of the severe weather, we've done four now in the last two weeks."

The team formed for this particular mission consisted of eight Airmen, as well as Army engineers, military police and Parwan PRT members.

"The Air Force was brought in on the mission when we sent out a notice requesting emergency donations to help offset the effects the weather was having on the Afghan populace," said Lt. Col. Lisa Bailey, Parwan PRT commander.

Airmen distributed about 1,500 pounds of clothing and 1,000 pounds of school

supplies and toys in support of the effort.

"We belayed our normal Adopt-A-Village program and split out the specific items these Parwan villages desperately needed," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. James Johnson, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing command chief.

As Air Force Airman 1st Class Michael Czeszycki, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group survival equipment apprentice, said, "We all volunteered to come out and help, trying to get supplies to the people who needed them the most."

That is the mission of the Parwan PRT at Bagram.

"We help the people of Afghanistan," said Bailey.

In addition to humanitarian missions, other PRT projects include building police stations, veterinary clinics, medical facilities, orphanages and electric power plants.

"We are helping the Afghan government stand up at a faster rate, jump starting the country's reconstruction efforts," said Bailey.

Currently, these efforts are focused on emergency relief.

Afghanistan is facing the harshest weather conditions it's seen in more than 10 years. The Afghans were not prepared for the cold weather and precipitation, because the area has experienced drought for years, said Bailey.

"Now the people are literally freezing and starving," said Johnson. "If we can assist in even the slightest way, we will be supporting their ongoing struggle to establish a democratic society."



**Afghan children join the human supply chain, passing a box of humanitarian aid from one of the Army's supply trucks to the Salang District headquarters building.**





Courtesy photo

# Personnel warfighters keep OEF moving

Story by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Kristin Fitzsimmons  
Combined Joint Task Force-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Over the last year, U.S. forces throughout Afghanistan were engaged in various efforts to help the country's citizens rebuild their nation and form a strong and safe foundation for future generations.

However, when it came time for these troops to be taken care of, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines assigned to the Combined Joint Task Force-76 personnel section, or CJ-1, stepped to the front lines.

Many people at home or serving overseas may take for granted how important a strong support element can be on a deployment. Without them, a lot of what service members consider second nature — like emergency or regular leave, four-day passes, awards or American Red Cross messages — might not happen as easily or sometimes at all.

"To say the very least, it has been hectic," said Spc. Jennifer Rupert, who is a 25th Infantry Division (Light) Soldier, deployed to Afghanistan from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. "For many reasons, life out here on deployment is greatly different than our job is back in Hawaii. There are a lot of tasks that we as an office accomplish out here that aren't really needed when we are at home.

"Being out here and simply knowing that we are helping our fellow Soldiers, who are

scattered throughout Afghanistan, is one of our biggest rewards," she said.

In the last year, CJ-1 has covered a large variety of the support spectrum by working 12 to 20 hour days. They processed more than 5,000 awards, 10,000 general leave requests, 10,000 pass requests, more than 1,200 emergency messages and leave requests, numerous extensions, and multiple Morale, Welfare and Recreation and United Services

Organization tours. All this in addition to upholding all their daily duties of being a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine.

"They work hard, 24 hours a day, seven days a week ... and they don't complain," said Sgt. Maj. Mildred Ruiz, CJTF-76 CJ-1 sergeant major. "It didn't matter if we have to wake someone up in the middle of the night, or ask them to pull a security detail on a flight out to one of the firebases, then turn around a couple of hours later and come back to work. (The) majority of them did it with a smile on their face, knowing their efforts were making life a little easier for those out in the field."

In their "free" time, service members working in CJ-1 participated in several humanitarian assistance missions. They delivered clothing, toys, food and other essentials to local orphanages and shelters, thereby helping U.S. forces build a stronger bond between the troops and Afghanistan citizens.

"Honestly, I don't think I could have asked for a better group of Soldiers," said Ruiz.

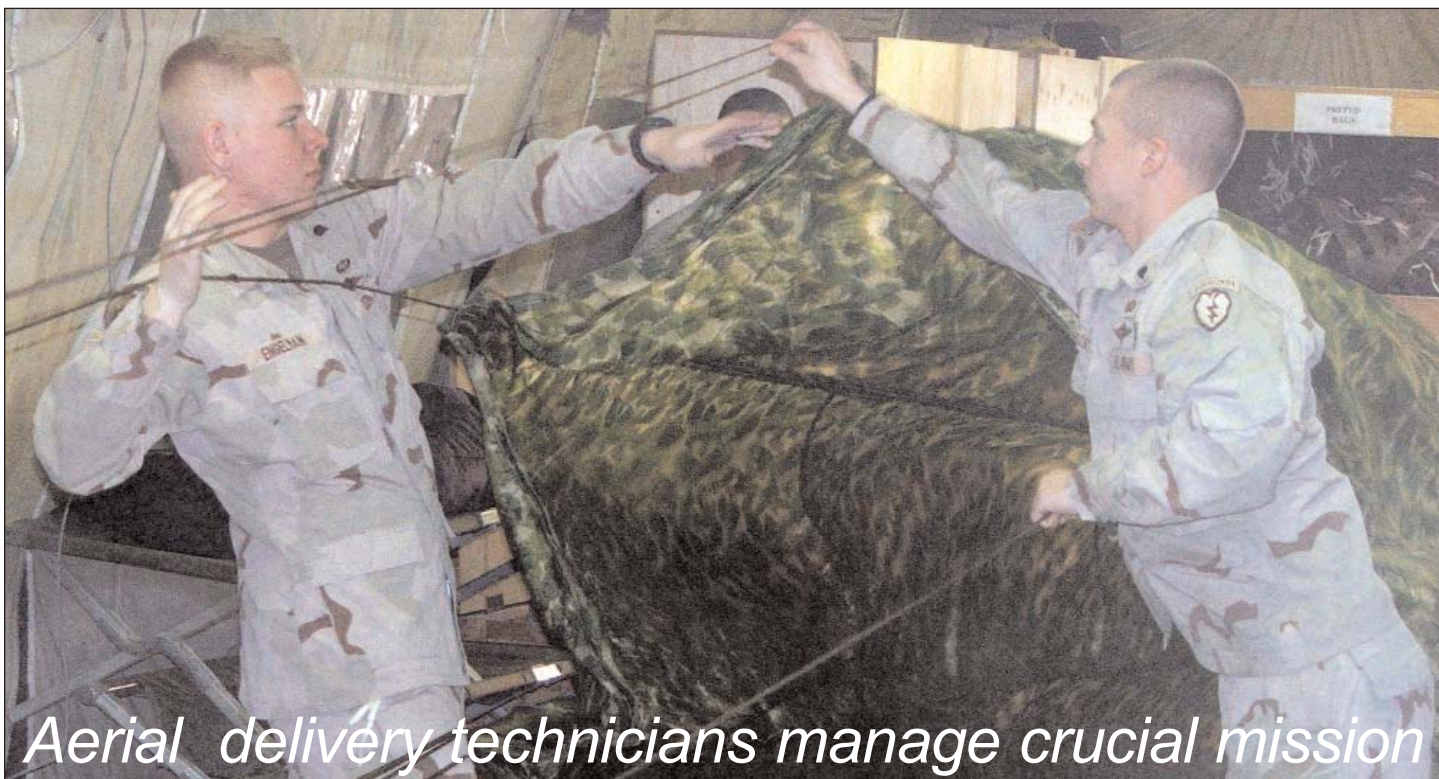


Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Kristin Fitzsimmons

**Above: Spc. Jennifer Rupert, a CJ-1 Soldier, checks her electronic files while coordinating for a Soldier to take a pass.**

**Top: CJTF-76 CJ-1 personnel take time away from the office to hit the rifle range and fulfill their weapons qualification requirements.**





## *Aerial delivery technicians manage crucial mission*

Story and photos by  
Air Force Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol  
416th Air Expeditionary Group

KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE, Uzbekistan — Every time an Air Force C-130 Hercules takes off on an airdrop mission from Karshi-Kahanabad Air Base with humanitarian supplies, 14 hands belonging to a seven-person U.S. Army parachute rigging team help make that mission possible.

For more than 11 months, Soldiers with the 87th Quartermaster Detachment, Logistics Task Force 524, have built Container Delivery System bundles, other-

wise known as airdrop pallets. Their main focus is to resupply troops supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as villages in remote areas of Afghanistan.

“Our job entails building CDS bundles for resupply and packing the parachutes that deliver the loads to the ground,” said Staff Sgt. Lloyd Johnson, detachment sergeant. “We coordinate for the movement of the loads and perform joint airdrop inspection, or JAI, duties with our Air Force counterparts.

“We also receive back some equipment from the airdrops and prepare it for the next mission through repacking procedures, or we repair it with our sewing machines when necessary,” he added.

The CDS bundles the team builds consist of one cargo bag used to deliver many types of resupply items, including food and water.

“We are, however, not limited to those items,” said Johnson.

Sgt. Joshua Rennie, the parachute pack/aerial delivery supervisor for the detachment, said their work affects the people who need it most on the frontlines of the Global War on Terrorism.

“This is an extremely important job we do here, because we are able to provide food and water to Soldiers in hard-to-reach areas through means of airdrop,” said Rennie. “We want

to contribute to those who are sacrificing the most.”

Spc. Miguel Trevino, Spc. Charles An, Spc. Andrew Gatschet, Spc. Aaron Engelman and Spc. Brent Bate serve as parachute pack/aerial delivery technicians for the detachment. Training on their process is non-stop, said Trevino.

“Even during peacetime we train for this on a daily basis by building training bundles,” said Trevino. “Here, we actually see our CDS bundles being delivered in a direct resupply to troops in different locations.”

“We hope our contributions during this operation make an impact,” added Gatschet. “We are proud to serve our country and assist the Soldiers fighting the war.”

Of everything they do, Bate said, he is proud to be directly supporting troops on the ground and getting aid to Afghans in remote areas.

“That is the best part,” he said. “We know how rough the troops on the ground have it, and we want to support them and their efforts through our resupply effort. We also add whatever goodies we can so they can have something to make their day better.”

The riggers are also happy about their role in helping not just Soldiers, but the local population.

“We are proud to help the Afghans,” said Johnson. “We want to contribute to their country and help make their lives better by delivering humanitarian assistance to their villages. For us riggers, that shows we are making a difference.”



**Above: Spc. Charles An (left), Spc. Andrew Gatschet (center) and Spc. Aaron Engelman, all parachute riggers with the 87th Quartermaster Detachment, Logistics Task Force 524, pack a parachute Feb. 20.**

**Top: Engelman (left) and Gatschet prepare a parachute for packing inside their facility.**



# Malaria medication important year-round

## Safeguarding the Coalition

Story by Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

**AFGHANISTAN** — Although winter conditions still exist throughout Afghanistan, preventive measures against malaria must still be taken.

At least one case of malaria was reported in February, bringing to light the importance of continuing with anti-malarial medication, even in the winter months.

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease that afflicts 300-500 million people in many parts of the world every year and kills approximately one million of them, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. Afghanistan is among the many areas where malaria is endemic, along with the rest of southeast and southwest Asia.

"Malaria is a vector-borne disease," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Christian T. Hans, a hospital corpsman for Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

Malaria is a parasitical infection, not a virus or bacteria. The disease can be passed into the human bloodstream by just one bite from an infected mosquito.

But there is a simple solution.

"Take your preventive meds," said Hans.

Every service member deployed to Afghanistan has received either doxycycline or mefloquine to prevent malaria. Doxycycline is taken every day and mefloquine is taken once a week. Regardless of the type of medication an individual takes, the end result is the same — protection from malaria.

Malaria starts with influenza-like symptoms, making it difficult to distinguish from a regular flu or cold. The incubation period is seven to 14 days, and then a victim will begin to feel the fever, nausea and headaches that are inherent with the disease. These symptoms will continue in a cycle, repeating every few days. Then, jaundice will set in. Between eight and 35 days after infection, the disease will attack the liver, ultimately causing liver failure if not treated.

The best way to detect the disease and begin treatment is through lab work, requiring service members to go to the doctor as

malaria that do occur. Those areas should be sprayed with a pesticide to kill the mosquitoes."

To further reduce the risk, personnel should obey uniform policies. They should also use repellents which will almost eliminate the possibility of becoming infected with malaria.

Sleeves on uniforms should always remain down to put a physical barrier between the person and the mosquitoes. Uniforms should also be treated with permethrin, an insect repellent that lasts the six-month-life of the uniform, prior to deployment to a region where malaria is prevalent. Uniforms may be re-treated as necessary throughout the deployment.

Insect repellent should also be worn on personnel's exposed skin. They are available to troops through individual unit supply and medical systems.

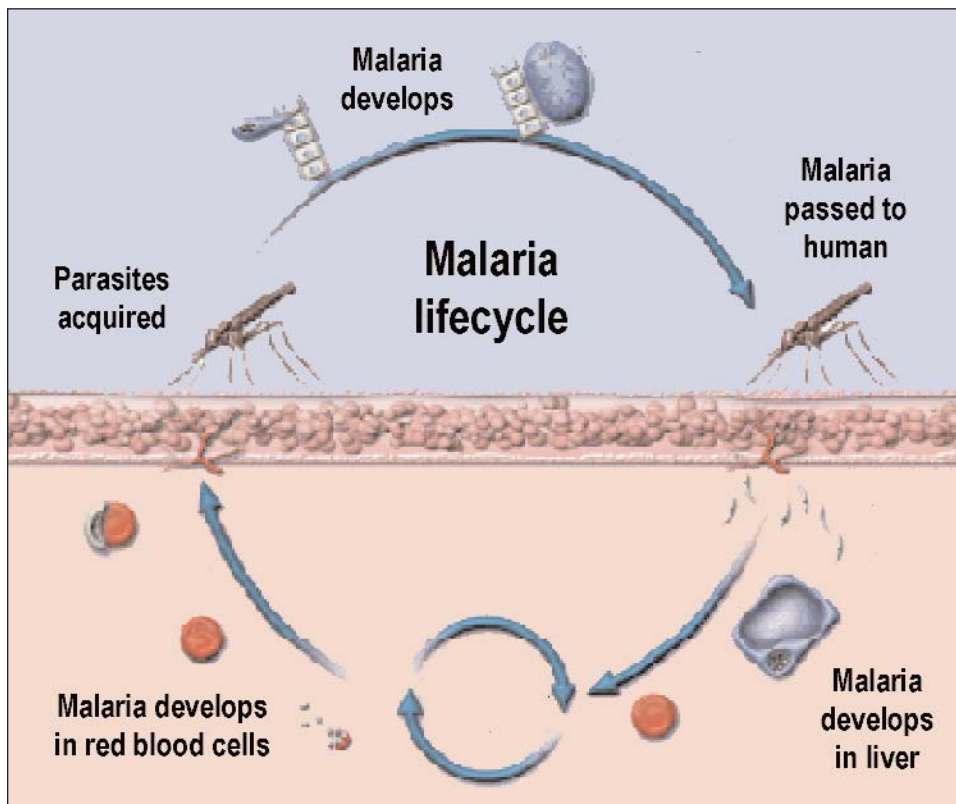
All this becomes even more important as the weather gets warmer and more rain appears, forming standing water for mosquitoes to breed in.

It's the responsibility of leaders to ensure service members are taking their medication

to avoid serious illness. The Marines of Co. I mostly rely on mefloquine for protection, and they receive their pills every Monday.

"I delegate it down to my team leaders to ensure all our guys are taking their medication every week," said Marine Cpl. Nick B. Dashna, a Co. I squad leader. "All our guys know that if they don't take their pills, we could become combat ineffective. Every individual is critical to mission accomplishment."

Taking a daily or weekly pill that could save lives and reduce illness is one of the easiest things Coalition troops can do to safeguard themselves against a serious, but very preventable disease.



soon as they realize something is wrong.

"Many people don't want to go to the doctor because they don't want to be labeled," said Hans. "But it's better to go to find out rather than wait until you're seeing the major symptoms."

The treatment for malaria is the same as the prevention — a higher dose of the medication. Medication, if taken as directed to begin with, will almost always keep an individual from becoming infected.

Some other ways to help prevent malaria are basic hygiene and preventive medicine measures.

"It's important to stay away from standing water," said Hans. "And preventive med technicians should track any outbreaks of

# Final: Wolfhounds' scouts conduct final mission in Afghanistan

*continued from Page 8*

"We did so much; it was kind of hard to think it was all coming to an end," he said.

Others didn't spend a lot of time looking back, but instead concentrated on the future.

"I'm just looking forward to going home," said Sgt. Aaron Fillmore. "That was what has kept me going all year."

One Soldier even used the mission as an opportunity to reenlist.

During a security halt, while some of the platoon conducted perimeter security, Spc. Cleavon Whittington climbed up to an observation point he'd used numerous times before and recited the oath of enlistment.

"I couldn't think of a more suitable place," said Whittington. "I had spent a lot of time on that route. It would be only fitting that I reenlist there."

Whittington enjoyed his mission in Afghanistan and could think of no better place to renew his commitment to the Army, he said.

"I really liked helping the people," he said. "We were so busy here. There was always something to do. I really liked that."



Sgt. Frank Magni

**Sgt. 1st Class Curt Cornelison, Scout Platoon, HHC, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt. platoon sergeant, walks down a hill while he and his team conduct a dismounted patrol on their last mission as a part of Operation Enduring Freedom.**

During the reenlistment ceremony, Whittington admitted he couldn't help but think about his platoon.

"While I was taking the oath, I couldn't help but think about all the guys," he said. "I knew this would be one of the last times we would be on a mission together."

Whittington was right, as he is set to move on from Hawaii as soon as his unit returns. Others will also move to different units, some will leave the Army and still others will remain with the Wolfhounds.

The mission ended much as it began. The Scouts followed their post-mission procedures for clearing and cleaning weapons and ensured their vehicles were prepared for any contingency.

This time when they returned, they also moved out of their barracks and prepared for training their replacements.

Just like any other mission throughout their year here, the scouts remained busy with the task at hand, conducting themselves no differently than their first day.

"We didn't treat it like our last patrol, because we really didn't know it would be our last," said Diaz. "Our mission here won't be finished until we are back in Hawaii."

## Stay Army...



Sgt. Jonathan Frenz

**The demolition of an ordnance cache is the backdrop for Spc. William Chandler (left), HHC, Combined Joint Task Force-76, as he recites the oath of enlistment. The reenlistment ceremony at Bagram Airfield's East River Range was led by Capt. Grigory Charny, HHC's executive officer.**

## SAMC *continued from Page 7*

promotion board," said Mincey.

He said the boards are conducted round-robin style, subjecting participants to rapid-fire stations that test an NCO's technical and tactical expertise in a variety of areas. Sometimes lasting up to four hours, the boards are some of the most difficult in the Army.

One of the most challenging portions of selection is the fact that each individual must be selected on his merit and the club never mandates a quota for a board, said Mincey.

"During our last board, we only selected 5 out of 17 individuals," he said.

For Jones, induction meant going to the SAMC board four times – two at Fort Lewis and two at Bagram.

The challenge for him was finding the time to study.

As a squad leader in an MP company that consistently patrols and responds to calls, studying meant missing more than a few hours of sleep, he said.

"It was a lot of work," he said. "But I was never going to stop trying. Getting in has meant a lot to me."

Following the induction, the Bagram SAMC made a special presentation to Olson, making him an honorary inductee into the club.



## Dear Editor **New CCB excludes some in combat, says reader**

I am writing this letter to address my frustration with the criteria for the new Close Combat Badge. I am a Military Police squad leader currently deployed to Afghanistan.

My platoon directly supports an infantry battalion and the MPs have been on every mission that the Combat Infantrymen's Badge has been awarded for our area of responsibility. My platoon has a medic, a mechanic and a communications specialist who have been involved in situations where the CIB was awarded. Our medic was even involved in an incident which warranted the Combat Medical Badge. However, because he did not fall directly under an infantry command, he was excluded from being awarded the badge.

In the Army, where all branches are considered "Soldiers first," I find it completely

amazing that the majority of the soldiers in the Army are discriminated from being awarded a badge for combat because of their military occupational specialty. I am sure there are numerous Soldiers in other MOSs who are closely associated with the combat operations and feel the same way that I do.

The new CCB expands to branches outside infantry, but it still excludes other MOSs which conduct daily operations in hostile areas.

Would it be too difficult to create a badge with the same criteria as the CIB, but open to all Soldiers? The Marines do not seem to have a problem awarding the Combat Action Ribbon to those who have been engaged in direct combat. Why is it a problem for the U.S. Army?

The current transformation to the Units

of Action includes Military Police right alongside infantry, combat engineers, as well as other combat support MOSs.

The Military Police Corps contains the most versatile MOS in the U.S. Army. We are a heavily armed and highly lethal force capable of many missions. I am willing to bet that any infantry battalion commander would pay to have MP assets readily available. I guess the main question here is: Why are the MPs the first to be called and the last to be recognized?

**Staff Sgt. Leonard R. Warth**  
25th Military Police Co.

*(Editor's Note: This letter is the personal opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.)*

## **Conference: Paktika leaders gather to discuss progress**

*continued from Page 6*

talk to many of the key local leaders at the same time," said Yaqobi.

Yaqobi, a native Afghan, said Paktika's main problem in the past has been poor security that resulted in instability, making reconstruction projects nearly impossible.

However, he has seen Paktika

Province make many strides in the past two years.

"I am very optimistic that (my organization), along with other NGOs, will be focusing more in Paktika in the next few years," he said.

One of the reasons for his optimism was the conference itself.

"During this conference, it was easy to see that the local

government has grown very strong and is very devoted to growth," he said.

Local officials echoed Yaqobi's sentiment after the conference.

"This conference was very important for us," said Dr. Shahabuddin, a Yahya Khak district leader. "We were able to bring NGOs here and show them it is a good place

to work."

Based on the success of the first conference, many are hoping this will pave the way for more.

"After a successful election, everyone is starting to believe (Paktika Province) is moving in the right direction," said Murphy. "Hopefully, this conference is one more step in the right direction."

## **Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week**



### **Afghan cultural tidbit**

#### **Have a nice day**

##### **Dari**

Roos-e-shuma khoosh  
(Roos-a-shoo-mah hoosh)

##### **Pashtu**

Woraz moo nikmorgha  
(War-ahz moo nik-more-ha)

**Afghan social occasions are predominantly family and extended family affairs. Picnics are important events on Fridays, the official government and religious holiday for Afghans. Many parties are for either male or female groups, and in rural areas of Afghanistan, if both genders are invited, they often participate separately.**



# Overwatch



***Freedom Watch***

**March 13, 2005**